

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 1126

SECDEF FOR ISA

ARMY FOR CDSLOG AND DCSOPS

E. O. 11652: N / A

TAGS: MASS, SA

SUBJECT: SAUDI ARABIAN NATIONAL GUARD PROJECT

REF: JIDDA 09

1. AMBASSADOR AND DATT MET WITH GUARD COMMANDER PRINCE ABDULLAH AT HIS REQUEST MARCH 19. ABDULLAH INFORMED US OF " GOOD NEWS": HE HAD SUCCEEDED IN CONVINCING KING FAISAL TO APPROVE SIGNATURE OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING. KING HAD EXPRESSED SOME RESERVATIONS AT LACK OF FULLY DE- TAILED U. S. PLAN BUT ABDULLAH HAD TOLD HIM MOU WAS AS " KEY IN AUTO ENGINE" WHICH ONCE TURNED WOULD PERMIT PROGRAM TO MOVE AHEAD. KING HAD GIVEN ABDULLAH IN WRITING FORMAL AUTHORIZATION TO SIGN MOU ON BEHALF OF SAG. ACCORDINGLY PRINCE STATED HE READY SIGN MOU AT ONCE IN PRECISELY SAME FORM AS AGREED UPON AT LAST MEETING WITH WASHINGTON NEGOTIATING TEAM ON MARCH 1 (REFTEL).

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2. FOREIGN MINISTRY' S LEGAL COUNSELOR ABDUL RAHMAN MANSURI ACCOMPANIED BY SANG' S OWN LAWYER THEN JOINED MEETING PRESENTING ORIGINALS OF MOU IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC WHICH WERE DULY SIGNED BY PRINCE ABDULLAH AND AMBASSADOR UNDER MARCH 19 DATE, WITH WARM MUTUAL CONGRATULATIONS AND EXPRESSIONS DETERMINATION BOTH SIDES ASSURE PROGRAM' S SUCCESS.

3. ABDULLAH ASKED FOR INFORMATION ON PROBABLE NEXT STEP. AMBASSADOR SAID THAT WHILE HE LACKED SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS HE WAS HOPEFUL HE MIGHT SOON BE AUTHORIZED PRESENT HRH WITH MILITARY SALES CASE PROVIDING FUNDS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PROJECT OFFICE WITHIN US DEPT. OF DEFENSE. PROJECT OFFICE WOULD BE CHARGED WITH PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SANG MODERNIZATION. PROJECT OFFICE WOULD INCLUDE OFFICERS QUALIFIED CARRY OUT PROCEDURES IN WASHINGTON AND ALSO TO WORK OUT IN SAUDI ARABIA WITH SANG REPRESENTATIVES SPECIFICATIONS FOR MODERNIZATION PLAN. ABUDLLAH CONCURRED IN DESIRABILITY THIS STEP. URGED USG MOVE WITH ALL POSSIBLE SPEED. ABDULLAH DID NOT BRING UP, NOR DID WE THINK IT APPROPRIATE AT THIS TIME TO DISCUSS OTHER LETTERS OF OFFER. (OUR LATEST INFORMATION IS THAT SANG GIVEING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO ACQUIRING NATO RIFLE. SANG NOT DESIROUS IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE OF CORPS OF CORPS OF ENGINEERS, THOUGH MAY WANT IT AT LATER STAGE. WE WILL MAKE RESERVED INQUIRIES RE COMMO EQUIPMENT STRESSING DESIRABILITY OF UNIFORMITY.)

4. COMMENT: REFRESHING PROMPTNESS WITH WHICH ABDULLAH HAS MOVED SEEMS FAVORABLE OMEN REFLECTING ABDULLAH' S ABILITY TAKE ISSUES DIRECTLY TO KING FOR IMMEDIATE DECISIONS, BYPASSING MANY OF USUAL BUREAUCRATIC OBSTACLES INHERENT IN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' CONSIDERATION ETC.. HOPE USG CAN RECIPROCATATE WITH COMPARABLE PROMPTNESS IN AUTHORIZING US TO PRESENT PROJECT TEAM LETTER OF OFFER.

IN PREPARING LATTER SUGGEST IT BE DRAWN TO COVER EXPENSES FOR PERHAPS TWO TO TWO AND A HALF YEAR PERIOD AND THAT WE BE GIVEN IF POSSIBLE DESCRIPTION IN OUTLINE OF TEAM' S PURPOSE, HOW IT WILL OPERATE, ETC., TO PRESENT TO ABDULLAH WITH LETTER OF OFFER. AS IN CASE OF USN TEAM DESIGNATED FOR SAUDI NAVY PROJECT, THERE MIGHT BE ADVANTAGE IN DRAWING UP SANG PROJECT GROUP SO THAT IT COULD UNDERTAKE
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MANY FUNCTIONS SUCH AS CONTRACTING, RECRUITMENT, PREPAR-

ATION OF SPECIFICATIONS ETC. , WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE
TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY DOD OR US ARMY OFFICES DEALING WITH
THESE MATTERS. PRINCE ABDULLAH WILL, WE BELIEVE, BE
EAGERLY AWAITING ARRIVAL OF FIRST US " ADVISORS" IN SAUDI
ARABIA. IN INTEREST OF CONTINUITY AND EFFECTIVENESS WE
WOULD SUGGEST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO POSSIBILITY
ASSIGNING PERSONNEL FOR ACCOMPANIED TOURS OF TWO YEARS OR
MORE. DOD MIGHT WISH THINK ALSO ABOUT POSSIBILITY INCLUD-
ING EVENTUALLY AMONG THOSE ASSIGNED TO SAUDI ARABIA TWO
OR THREE YOUNG ARABISTS, MILITARY OR CIVILIAN, TO ACT AS
INTERPRETERS, EXPEDITERS, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS MEN. PRO-
JECT AND INDIVIDUALS ASSIGNED WOULD BOTH
BENEFIT.
THACHER

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